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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the conceptual issues involving the application of "development communication" to the American context, examined people's needs for development information, the communication system that delivers such information, and the barriers that exist. The paper notes that people's needs for development information may occur in the general, the personal, and the job context. First, several newspapers were examined to construct an inventory of content which could fulfill development functions. The paper then proceeded with a survey which examined public perceptions of what would make individuals more productive and where they would go for help and information to achieve this. Subjects, 344 adults in a large midwestern city, were interviewed by telephone. People's perceptions of what would increase their own productivity were divided into several categories: (1) personal control; (2) external help with individual initiative; and (3) external control in the workplace. The paper concluded that results also indicated that resources people would use included other institutions, the workplace, media, other people, professional help, and personal discipline. Eighty-eight references and two tables of data are attached. (RS)

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"DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION": APPLYING THE CONCEPT IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

"DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION":
APPLYING THE CONCEPT IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

The concept of "development communication" has been applied in the Third World for more than a decade but not in the American context. In this paper we explored conceptual issues, then examined people's needs for development information, the communication system that delivers such information and barriors that exist. We noted that people's needs for development information may occur in the general, the personal, and the job context. Several newspapers were examined to construct an inventory of content which could fulfill development functions. This critical analysis was followed by the results of a survey tapping public perceptions of productivity. Conducted in a midwestern metropolitan area, the survey tapped people's perceptions of what would make them more productive and where they would go for help and information to achieve this.

Introduction:

The concept of "development communication" has been applied in the Third World for more than a decade, often by American or American-trained researchers. However, we've seen no major efforts to apply the concept in the United States, perhaps out of a presumption that "development" was something which was needed only in "developing countries." This may change as scholars recognize its potential as an explanatory variable in the current context.

In economics, a similar evolution occurred with scholarly interest in entrepreneurship, a concept key to the development literature. In the 1920's and 1930's there was great interest in the functions of entrepreneurship for economic growth; after World War II, studies centered on the social, psychological and cultural characteristics of entrepreneurs. By the late 1950's research shifted from the United States to underdeveloped nations (Cochran, 1964; Glade, 1967; Greenfield and Strickon, 1986: 8-9). Then, in the 1970's American interest in "productivity" grew again as supply-side economics became more popular and attention shifted from demand management to production and supply factors (Backman, 1983: 13-14). International competition also grew, and the popular media focused increasing attention on technological innovators and entrepreneurs as answers to foreign competitors.

The notion of "development communication" generally has implied government involvement, an ideological position not acceptable to many Americans. However, several strains of communication research are directly applicable to development in the United States, and a consensus seems to be emerging that Americans need to increase their productivity to remain competitive in a world economy (Backman, 1983). While the means for achieving this competitiveness may be largely "economic," communication researchers could make significant contributions but thus far, their work has been limited to focusing on communication patterns in the workplace. The concept of "development communication" seems tailor-made for application in this area, but it calls for a critical examination of the relationship between the "communication system" and development in the economic sphere.

Here we will examine the concept of "development communication" in an American context. First we will explore conceptual issues, then examine people's needs for development information, the communication system that delivers such information and barriers that exist. Then several newspapers will be examined to construct an inventory of content which could fulfill development functions. This will be followed by the results of a survey tapping public perceptions of productivity.

Defining the Concept & Sorting Out the Theories:

Development has been defined by economists as the creation of new enterprises that disturb the current state of the economy and produce improved states. These enterprises represent combinations of materials and forces that are spontaneous and are the major means for

transforming the economy (Greenfield et al., 1979: 6). The persons who carry out these functions are called entrepreneurs, decision makers and innovators whom Schumpeter (1949: 64-75) saw as the key to econmic growth. While granting the economic dimension to development, other social sciences have broadened the concept to include relationships with political factors, social phenomena and communication variables.

The concept of development has been linked to mass media more often than to communication processes in general (which may encompass interpersonal, organizational, and mass communication). For example, Hachten (1981) looks at media philosophies as clashing ideologies that represent different perceptions about the nature and role of news because of historical traditions and divergent political philosophies. One of the five major concepts he uses to describe current trends is the "development concept," where the mass media are seen as important instruments for nation-building. However, there certainly are different views within this perspective, from those who look at mass media as more independent institutions in a pluralistic framework to those who hold that all instruments of mass communicaion should be mobilized by the central government to aid in major tasks of nation building--fighting illiteracy and poverty, building a political consciousness and assisting in economic development.

Most of the Third World is concerned with national development, a concept which generally has emphasized economic growth but is now undergoing changes. At times change at the individual level has been called "modernization" while change at the national level has been termed "development" (see Bendiz, 1966; Schramm and Lerner, 1976; Rogers, 1983; and Schramm, 1964 for a discussion of the distinction historically). Theories of national development range from ideological applications (e.g., Marxist, pluralist, and variations on these themes) to those emphasizing economic, psychological, political or communication models.

Descriptions of specific development theories and empirical evidence are available in many places: economic theories (Todaro, 1981; Rostow, 1960, 1978), psychological theories (Freeman, 1976; Tekiner, 1980; Hagen, 1962a, b); political theories (Frey, 1973; Pye, 1966; Deutsch and Merritt, 1970), and communication theories. The latter include Lerner's classic theory about the passing of traditional society (Lerner, 1958, 1977; Frey, 1973; Winham, 1970) and the voluminous literature on the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1983). In the 1960's Schramm (1964) and others argued for using the mass media to supplement expensive educational programs requiring face-to-face instruction. Hornik (1988) notes that agriculture was a prime target for these communication programs. However, communication programs for development in Third World countries did not produce as promised, perhaps because of unrealistic expectations, some argued. In the 1970's, critics argued that problems were more resource based and communication programs too centralized (Hornik, 1988). They argued for more participation and involvement by those in the target populations (Rogers, 1976), as well as a recognition that communication programs could only complement political and economic

programs focusing on resource allocations (Hornik, 1988). Development communication as generally practiced has been almost exclusively "interventionist" in its ideology, presuming that government programs in one form or another are crucial for reaching developmental goals.

Theories contributed by other social sciences also have attracted criticism. Greenfield and Strickon (1986: 10-11) argue that psychological studies such as McClelland's and Hagen's have not contributed significantly to contemporary efforts to comprehend the phenomenon of entrepreneurship; they point to the emergence in the mid 1960's of scholars experimenting with a view of the entrepreneur as a creative decision-maker, where the distinctive aspects were the settings, circumstances or situations within which the decisions and choices were made (Glade, 1967). The difference in part represents disciplinary squabbles over the importance of "the individual" or the "the environment," the latter configured in sociological terms.

In the 1960's and 1970's, economic models of development were influenced by economists using the model of an international economic system (Fejes, 1980). These analyses focused attention at the national or international level, with an emphasis on relations defined in terms of dependency/self-sufficiency or equality/balance. Though dependency theory also has appeared in the communication literature (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1982), it has referred to communication and economic systems or behaviors. Earlier economic and discipline-related models used by communication scholars lost their popularity in the mid-1970's, replaced in large part by critical/ideological debates. And, as often happens, just when dependency theory becomes fashionable, it too is challenged by empirical evidence (see Dizard, 1985; Parker, 1978) and a reconsideration of more middle-range theories. Within business and economics, research in the various streams has continued and grown with changes in the economic and political environment.

Defining Development at the Individual Level--Development at the individual level often has been equated with ideas of modernism. However, "modernism" has ideological baggage unacceptable to many, who note a Western bias and tendency to place it at the end of a continuum opposite to traditionalism. But there is no need to conceptually link change on economic dimensions with changes in other behaviors. Such links should be empirical questions. A concept that is central to notions of development is "productivity," which economists see as crucial for national economic health (Backman, 1983; Kendrick, 1983). Productivity in turn refers to the level of individual achievement, or the extent to which one's behaviors produce results (goods and services in economic terms) that are valued by others in public and private marketplaces. What is valued or acceptable for individual productivity may vary by generation, culture, society, or ideology/philosophy. And not all achievements need be placed on a material-reward scale that compares individuals for the concept to have utility. Productivity may refer to individual growth from a current position to maximum realization (Maslow, 1970). The comparable definition of productivity at the national level could entail a summary of productivity at lower levels, though generally

measured in terms that ignore the individual and aggregate individual and group behaviors; other concepts (rates of productivity by sub populations) also are relevant at the national level.

Defining "Development Communication"--Accepting "individual productivity" as the focus for development, we are faced with its link to the other term in our focal concept, "communication." The connecting link is expressed as the preposition "for," and the issue becomes one of determining how the encoding-and-decoding of messages ("communication") affects or is linked to increased personal productivity. This is a shift from the communication literature which focuses on people as "consumers" (of media products) to a focus on people as "producers." How does communication (interpersonal networks and mass media use) help people as producers rather than as consumers? Though our focus in the discussion is at the individual level, we can move up levels to look at relationships between patterns of communication and productivity achieved by groups or a nation. This conceptualization is not far from the definition of a scholar who has worked with this concept in a developing country, the Philippines. Quebral (1975: 2) defines development communication as "the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential." She notes that the "systematic use" of communication techniques and strategies to "persuade specified groups of people to change their habits, life style or ways of thought is by no means new" but the "purpose it serves and the venue of its action" are (Quebral, 1975: 2). Quebral sees development communication as a Third World phenomenon, but we argue that the same questions can be applied to the industrial environment, which also needs increased productivity, albeit from a higher level in many cases.

Application in a Developed Country

Jamias (1975: 16) notes that development communication in the Third World context is viewed as purposive, which distinguishes it from the thrust of communication studies in the developed world. However, we can retain the concept as delineated earlier and still pose the question of how existing communication patterns are related to issues of productivity and development. In a recent summary of development communication in the Third World, Hornik (1988) offers three broad explanations for why communication programs and projects have been disappointing: 1) information is no solution for a lack of resources; 2) audiences for information programs are not responsive even when such information might help, and 3) information programs have not been done correctly--the channels available are extremely weak and information flows are not adequate (Hornik, 1988: 157-159). We would argue that development communication scholars have focused too much on traditional government programs and not looked carefully at existing patterns linking communication to development phenomena. There is no need to insist on a pro-active program of intervention for scholars to raise questions about how people's communication patterns

are related to their productivity or how the communication system is related to productivity at higher levels. If diffusion research is an example of "development communication" research, then scholars in developed contexts have raised such questions for several decades.

However, though we "need not" raise questions about values, we propose to do precisely that in our subsequent analysis. Clearly, not everyone in developed nations achieves the same level of benefits from his or her efforts, and the answers are not all "economic." Urban centers contain concentrations of poor people, and rural areas include growing numbers of lower-income families. Issues of productivity in both cases represent issues of survival for neighborhoods and towns, for life styles and family and ethnic heritage.

Certainly, a better understanding of how communication is related to productivity could lead to changes by institutions or individuals, including the mass media. The nature of intervention is likely to be linked to ideology or philosophy, though not necessarily. Indeed, one might argue, as economists do (Nafziger, 1986: 24-27), that central planners in socialist systems and a host of leaders in pluralist market economies (political, business, etc.) are both interested in increasing people's productivity through programs that reflect national and cultural values. Recent evidence suggests that intervention by central planners is less efficient than that which recognizes consumer values through market forces. In fact, some have asked whether closed systems could compete technologically because they suffered from isolation (via communication) and the subsequent competition of ideas (Clarke, 1983; Malik, 1984).

What are the ingredients of an overall model at the individual level, and what are the implicit assumptions? Our model begins with two major ingredients: people's information needs and communication channels.

People's Needs for Development Information:

What are people's information needs for individual productivity? Essentially, this is a statement of how uses and gratifications relate to "productivity." As Swanson (1979) and others have noted, a variety of media content can serve the same function or use for different people. Thus, we need to separate out the "type of content" from the specific use, in this case, personal productivity.

First, how can messages or information affect one's productivity? We distinguish between the job context, the general context, and the personal context.

The job context refers to individual behaviors acted out in employment situations, generally within larger organizations. Here falls the literature on organizational communication and its relation to job performance. Both interpersonal relations, specialized media channels used in the organization, and macro organizational communication networks are relevant here. For a discussion of some of this literature and the issues pertinent to the topic here, see

Goldhaber (1986).

The general context relates to the non-organizational situation that directly affects individual productivity. This includes ways in which an individual is linked to the larger economic environment, the community, and greater forces that affect one's job and personal productivity; we must be alerted to these forces and can act by altering one's job, mobilizing others for political action or appealing to various organizations. For example, a variety of media channels and interpersonal networks alert people to foreign competition that can threaten one's employer, to the amount of unemployment insurance that may be available if one is laid off, and to the educational opportunities for enhancing one's job skills.

The personal context refers to changes in one's personal state that affect productivity (e.g., health, and satisfaction with familial and social relationships); we obtain information from a variety of communication networks that can help satisfy personal needs that improve productivity in job situations.

Several issues and assumptions stemming from the above scenario need to be examined. First, we are employing a fairly rational model, i.e., people will make conscious decisions based on their self interest. Secondly, people know their options in given situations, or at least can recognize them. Third, people know what's best for them or is more likely to work best for them. Fourth, people can recognize the relationship between their job situation and the larger system, or react to the relationship when it is made explicit for them. Fifth, people are motivated to be more productive because it's in their self interest to do so. Sixth, that the media and other communication channels supply the information to allow informed decisions among choices. Each of these requires some elaboration.

First, some times people make decisions on the spur of the moment which are not in their interest in the long run, at least in the opinion of impartial observers. Witness the many smokers, over eaters or spendthrifts who continue their habits even in the face of evidence that their behavior patterns have negative consequences in their lives.

Second, we need empirical evidence of the extent to which people seek out options for increasing personal productivity or recognize those made explicit when encountered in communication stemming from other motivations. We would expect that this varies by one's state in the life cycle. Thus, at crucial points in one's life (e.g., graduation from high school or when fired from a job), an individual may seek out more "option information" or be alert to that encountered along the way.

Third, certainly people do not "always know what's best" for increasing their productivity, but, in a democratic context, we grant each individual that right and responsibility for decision making. Thus, even the New York "bag lady" who recently wanted to stay on the streets was granted her wish despite the availability of public

housing and official coercion to go there.

Fourth, people's recognition of the relationship between their personal productivity and "larger forces" is a complex issue. At one time, the general American public may have felt economics was a dismal science and information about foreign steel could clearly be ignored, but today's steelworker is likely to see the linkage more directly. Again, we need empirical information about what linkages are seen clearly by which people and what types of linkages are still ignored. Since the amount of information is so extensive here, we will consider it more fully again in the section on media content.

Fifth, people are motivated to be more productive because it's in their self interest. Certainly, there are differences in levels of motivation and in material needs which require financial gains to satisfy them. Furthermore, though many people seek major satisfaction from their job situation (which should increase motivation to be more productive), many others seek personal fulfillment from outside the job (Parker and Smith, 1976; Wilson, 1980). For McClelland (1961), the entrepreneur is driven by an inner urge to improve and is motivated by profits as a measure of achievements rather than a source of enrichment (Nafziger, 1986: 2).

Communication Channels & the Communication System:

Brenda Dervin (1977) provides a conceptual model of the individual and his or her information needs. That model's four basic components are: citizens, information needs, sources, and solutions. Dervin's focus was on the urban environment, and she chose to focus on citizen roles" which represent several other "urban roles" (Neighborhood resident, voter, etc.). She notes that the urban resident faces a formidable task in managing his or her information environment, since the individual needs to be exposed to an overwhelming diversity of information in order to cope with problems in even a single time span (Dervin, 1977: 207-8). The individual needs both diverse and selective informational inputs, the former to provide coverage of one's concerns and the latter to prevent information overload.

Dervin sees two requirements to information management, appropriate sources and appropriate solutions. She then looks at barriors between individuals and sources, solutions, institutions, etc. In summary, the individual needs accessibilty (lack of barriors) to information along five different dimensions: societal (the necessary information must be available in the social system); institutional (the information sources must be both capable and willing to deliver the needed info); physical (the individual must be able to make physical contact with the necessary sources); psychological (the individual must be willing to see his needs as information needs, to approach and obtain the info from appropriate sources and to accept the possibility that his or her needs can be resolved); and intellectual (the individual must have the training and ability to acquire and process the information needed).

Across the various contexts and needs, people can obtain

information enhancing their productivity through a variety of communication networks. Though we could configure the communication system in many ways, we think a useful distinction is to follow the traditional distinction between mass and interpersonal channels, with subsequent subdivisions for describing their structure and organization.

The mass communication system includes both the mass media and specialized media. The former are the subject of most research, but the latter are enormously successful and increasingly important in a complex and fragmented system. We'll discuss each of these.

The mass media in the United States serve to fulfill a variety of people's uses and gratifications (see Blumler and Katz, 1974, Blumler, 1979, Weaver and Budeenbaum, 1979 for examples of this literature). We also can state media functions for the country as a whole (see Jeffres, 1986:67, for a discussion). However, seldom if ever have researchers sought to link news values or other media content directly to such explicitly economic functions as personal productivity. Most of the literature on uses and gratifications focuses on "consumer" roles or personal gratifications not explicitly related to or translated into economic behaviors. Furthermore, focusing on news content, media rely on institutional sources in their surveillance of the economic, political and social environment (Whitney et al., 1985). Thus, we read about unemployment statistics in the state and country and watch TV reports about the stock market or a local factory shutting its doors. But we see relatively little information about how an individual can get or keep a job. This is changing somewhat as cable TV focuses on consumer segments with information tailored more closely to individual needs, but this is closer to the situation found with specialized media, particularly magazines.

Specialized media include the hundreds of commerical, targeted magazines as well as the thousands of trade publications and newsletter services which focus more closely on people's individual interests and behaviors. Specialized media do provide an abundance of information designed to improve people's productivity in job situations, from entrepreneur-oriented magazines to stock-tip newsletters. These media survive by successfully targeting their audiences, and, as one librarian noted, if there's a profitable niche, some publisher will fill it.

A recent trip to a downtown newsstand illustrates the range of magazine titles available to the general public. More than any other medium, magazines are narrowly focused and targeted at audiences with particular needs. Some general audience publications persist, such as Life and Reader's Digest. The letter also contains considerable "personal guidance" information on topics ranging from sex and health to family relations. Some of this indirectly could affect one's productivity.

Second in general focus are the news magazines, Time, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report. All contain the usual range of public affairs topics as well as business and special sections. In its mid-

September issue (1988), Newsweek, for example, had an article on education--"giving parents a choice." Its business section featured a story on the Federal Reserve, information immediately useful only to a few business people. U.S. News has a section entitled, "News You Can Use," which that same week included sections on travel abroad, diabetes and musical instruments for students. Most of this is aimed at upper SES individuals.

Among the "self improvement" magazines are representatives from sports, which range from Runners World to Backpacker. Most of the spectator sports magazines fit into the "hobby" or "leisure interests" categories, e.g., pets magazines, travel (Holiday-Travel, Islands, all aimed at the affluent), entertainment (from Billboard to Spin and Variety), hobbies--computer magazines, photography, and crafts. Some of these may contain information aimed at people as "producers," though it is scarce. For example, Outdoor & Travel Photography magazine (September, 1988) had an article entitled, "Sell What You Shoot," and Crafts and Country Quilts contained stories about producing particular products that can be sold. Computer magazines like Byte and PC World do feature "producer" information that appeals to those trying to keep up with technology for their offices as well as hobbyists enthralled with computers or software as leisure-time activities.

Science magazines offer a different basis for their content than the self-help magazines, but some of their articles are quite similar in how they may function to improve people's productivity. Psychology Today (September, 1988) included an article on stress at the office (directed at white collar employees) and Popular Science featured two sections with potentially useful "producer" information, Science Newsfront and Electronic Newsfront; these are likely to be most useful to hobbyists but could do more in some situations. Omni offered an article on the "science of gambling" as well as a piece on Classroom Earth Network--education by satellite.

Recently, several magazines have emerged that stress self-help in some manner. For example, Lifeline America features articles on drug and pregnancy prevention, treatment and recovery from drug addiction, and improving relationships with others. One magazine, Relationships, features profiles, advise lists and, reports by professionals. Another magazine, New Age, is subtitled as a magazine for "human potential," with articles on food, health, religion, business and politics. In a recent issue (September, 1988) one article described an innovative chocolate factory, a small enterprise that could serve as a model to some entrepreneur or existing family business. Magazines directed at women as individuals (MS, Woman, Glamour, Essence, Savvy) or mothers (Child, Children magazines) also contain self-help information. For example, Working Mother recently featured this article: "Ten Ways a Baby Can Recharge Your Career." Some men's magazines (e.g., GQ) now and then do similar things.

One group of magazines fits in a category we'd call lifestyle because they focus on aspects of one's life as hobbies or leisure interests. Here are home, cooking and health magazines such as Home,

House Beautiful, Gourmet, Weight Watchers, and American Health. Some may contain information useful indirectly to people as "producers." Country Living, for example, features articles on home building and architecture.

Last on our list is the category that on the surface clearly contains candidates for "development communication." These are the business magazines that feature information relevant to "producers," particularly those aimed at entrepreneurs. The larger business magazines such as Forbes, Fortune and Business Week are most likely read in the immediate situation for "leisure entertainment" rather than instrumental reasons to improve one's productivity. However, some of the newer magazines in this class, do aim at those with such motivations. For example, in September (1988) Franchise & Business Opportunities included its 1989 annual report, "1,851 opportunities" to start one's own business. Another magazine, Small Business, included a list of "10 Tips for Your Start-Up," and promotes itself as a conveyor of ideas for entrepreneurs. Business Age, which is directed at small businesses, included a piece entitled "Improving Personal Productivity." Some magazines aim at market segments, e.g., Woman's Enterprise.

And one magazine borrows its name from the symbol of productivity, Entrepreneur. The September, 1988, issue included the following list of enterprises: Comedy Clubs, small wineries, service industries, and kiosks and carts. The range is from enterprises requiring a considerable investment (wineries) to those needing relatively little startup capital (carts). An Opportunity Mart acts as a classified section. However, some of the advertisements hype opportunities in bold headlines, e.g., "How To Get Rich Sooner Than You Think," and most of the articles are "success stories" rather than balanced pieces that alert potential entrepreneures to problems as well as possibilities.

Clearly, most of the specialized magazines are tuned to by consumers with uses and gratifications that parallel those for other, more general media (to pass the time, because one likes to learn more about topic A, because topic B is gratifying after a long day). But some of the publications are sufficiently narrow in focus to suggest that they attract those most motivated to increase their productivity. Just as most people don't go to a furniture store unless they're thinking about buying furniture, most people would not buy a magazine on "entrepreneurs" or "small businesses" unless they had a desire to run their own business or thought such a possiblity might exist in their future. It may be in such situations that "development" information is most likely to be diffused successfully.

Interpersonal communication is seldom configured as a system at the level we are conceptualizing here (see Fisher, 1978, and Millar and Rogers, 1976, for a conceptualization of interpersonal communication as a system at the dyadic level). We are referring to the face-to-face encoding-and-decoding of messages in the American context. Clearly, it is more profitable to look at the structures within which these communication processes take place. That leads us

to the organizational and other contexts which tell us about the likelihood for development information to emerge.

Barriers:

The American communication system has one major feature characteristic of all modern democracies but particularly central in this country. That feature is "mobility" within the system. In contrast to more traditional and centralized societies, emphasis is placed on the individual and one's right to become involved in communication channels. Thus, one can move in and out of communication networks (mass or interpersonally arranged) as one's circumstances change. Certainly, some people with more resources (e.g., money to purchase media--as an encoder or decoder) or good listener) will have greater opportunities, but, in all cases, the individual has extensive mobility to operate throughout the communication system.

This mobility of the individual also can lead to isolation, particularly among those with the fewest resources or the most inadequate individual communication skills. In their explanation of the knowledge gap phenomenon, Tichenor and his colleagues (1970, 1980) cite several explanatory factors, two of which are important here. First, lower SES individuals have poorer information-processinc skills, and, second, the mass media system is "structured" to the disadvantage of lower SES people because more public affairs information is located in the print media than in broadcast media, and it is the latter on which lower SES individuals rely.

We believe that the Tichenor et al. premises about the mass media system generally apply to the communication system as a whole. Simply put, the chief barrier to maximizing the effeciency of the American communication system is the inherent disadvantage of those who need it most for improving their own productivity. At the extremes are the socially isolated itenerants (bag ladies and other long-term homeless people) who communicate with each other under bridges if they communicate at all. Their communication and information-processing skills are generally poorer at the outset and through isolation suffer and atrophy to an even more inadequate level. Little communication research has been conducted among this group. Moving up to a larger and more significant group, we need to consider the hardcore unemployed. Are they the least likely to read newspapers and magazines? Despite circumstances that motivate one to seek a job or public assistance, it is an empirical question whether the same circumstances motivate one to use mass or specialized media or particular interpersonal communication networks for help.

In general, we would argue that an even cursory evaluation of the mass media system supports the generalization that the mass media system operates to the greatest benefit of those with the most resources and the greatest communication skills. This is particularly true for the news media--especially print media. News values define events or situation as news if they embody elements of conflict, eminence, prominence, etc. (see Jeffres, 1986: 105-111, for a discussion of this literature). No where among the list do we find values that would generate "information" and "news" connecting the most disadvantaged with opportunities for improving their productivity. In fact, the want ads are probably the most valuable content of development communication, if we focus on newspapers. Conventions of newsgathering also are unfavorable for goals stressing development communication. For example, journalists rely on "experts" and institutional sources representing power or access to those with power (Whitney et al, 1985). Though information about unemployment or the inefficiency of a welfare department may emerge from such news-gathering patterns, little of the information will be helpful to individuals in the audience needing the most help.

The barriers we've described refer to the general mass media, which serve peoples needs as citizens, voters, and consumers but not as "producers." However, specialized media do focus on such needs, and here are magazines and newsletters. In recent years, we've seen a tremendous growth in the business press and specialized magazines. As noted above, magazines are targeted at young entrepreneurs in a variety of ways, and expensive newsletters or news services target more well-heeled audiences that use their news and information to improve productivity (or, at least, try to make money from the advice). Again, these are the media which are least likely to include the most needy in their audiences.

A second barrior is individual motivation. There are several dimensions to this. First, individuals vary in their motivation to be productive, and to seek information that would increase their productivity. Certainly, not everyone finds their greatest satisfaction or personal identification in their "job," but one's personal productivity in modern industrial societies is embodied by "the job," and an increasing percentage of people seek satisfaction in the workplace (see Wilson, 1980, Zablocki and Kanter, 1976, for more on life styles and personal satisfaction). Furthermore, people are "defined" by others in terms of their productive contributions to society. Certainly, one's role as a "producer" is not the only one, but it has increased in importance in modern societies, where the percentage of people working has grown as more and more women have entered the workplace. Thus, the significance of "having a job" and "being productive" has grown. One might argue that our communication system, particularly our mass communication subsystem, has increased its emphasis on "productivity" and economics in general. However, despite Galbraith's (1967) view that consumers in industrial society have a never-ending funnel of needs stimulated by advertising, some people are "less motivated" than others to be productive. Certainly this is a "truism" across societies and ideologies, particularly from the standpoint of officials and "authorities."

Given one's circumstances, individuals still differ in their motivations to seek information which would--in their view--potentially improve their productivity. McClellend's (1961) "Ach" (achievement motivation factor) may be related to such an information-seeking motivation, but we do not have empirical evidence of that. Furthermore, regardless of the motivation, how informed about the system are individuals? Thus, the unemployed stock broker knows what networks are likely to be most successful, and the employed professional knows what information services are most useful, but what does the unemployed auto worker know? What does the homemaker do who has no job experience? What does the dropout do when he or she dislikes or cannot read newspapers and refers only to the comics and sports section? We're not talking about "intelligence," though there may be differences in people's reading abilities. We're talking about current information-seeking skills, which are the consequences of past training. Furthermore, how are people trained to seek information which would increase their productivity? Interpersonal communication scholars have generated hundreds of studies on "communication competence," which focuses on people's ability to encode messages and engage in communication in interpersonal contexts. We know of no efforts which extend the concept across contexts but within functions such as "personal development/productivity."

Several additional questions are raised? How does the communication system relate to the "overall" incentive system? And does the communication system itself lay out the political, economic and other barriors to people's increased productivity?

What's Available in the Media?

Several newspapers were examined to construct an inventory of content which on the surface woudl appear to offer the greatest potential for increasing people's productivity in one of several ways. In other words, what current content best represents newspapers contributions to "development communication"? Newspapers examined included: the New York Times, a representative of the "elite" press; the Wall Street Journal, also an elite paper but one targeting audiences interested in business; the New York Post, which is targeted at a moderate and middle income audience rather than professionals; USA Today, a national paper with features different from most dailies; and the Cleveland Plain Dealer, a metropolitan daily aimed at general audiences. To these major media we added several neighborhood and community papers in the Cleveland area, including The Plain Press, an activist paper run by a community group, the Old Brooklyn News, operated by a non-profit community development corporation, and two commerical enterprises, the Slavic Village Voice and Garfield Heights Leader. Our critical scrutiny is constructive rather than an exhaustive content analysis.

Most of the newspaper content represents efforts to meet people's needs for development information in the general context, though there also are examples of content in the job and personal contexts. The first three content categories, social linkages, institutional

linkages and group linkages, represent the general context.

"Social Linkage"/Information on Social Problems--This content is strongly represented in the media, and its function as development communication is to help people form opinions on public issues that indirectly affect one's productivity. From USA Today comes a half-page article on Radon gas and where to go for help. And the New York Times' front page features the 1988 presidential election, while the metro section reports on local ambulance and housing problems. All papers reported on a fair housing bill that would prohibit discrimination against families with children; this issue is the most relevant for "development communication." In New York, the Post reported on the problem with beggars and the Times reported on problems in education, particularly among teachers who feel left out on policy decisions, and tests measuring a school's progress in the 3 R's; one is a "producer" issue and the other a long-term productivity matter. Our neighborhood newspaper provided the clearest effort of focusing on problems at a level immediately applicable to individuals. The Plain Press contained a half-page Youth Guide that listed locations, dates, and phone numbers of programs to help youth--ranging from reading clubs to camps and lunch programs. And the Leader described a program to collect food and clothing for the needy, whose "productivity" is preceded by urgent and immediate efforts to find food and shelter for the night.

"Institutional Linkage"/Information on Institutions--Though similar to information on social problems, news about institutions is somewhat different. Its origins are found in the traditional "watchdog function" of the media to scrutinize public institutions so that they're accountable to the voters and the public in general. In the short term, people not only form opinions that can lead to voting but also may take steps to change policies (contacting their public representatives, mobilizing other citizens, etc.) From the Plain Dealer, we have an example of a story reporting problems found by state watchdogs examining state HMO's. Lemert and Larkin (1979) offer a concept that is useful in analyzing the utility of the information provided for the purposes stated. They note that media are reluctant to include "mobilizing information," those items which allow people to organize, to influence, to pressure--phone numbers, names, locations, etc. In the articles we surveyed, little of this information was found in stories on either institutions or social problems, limiting its utility for development communication.

"Group Linkage"/Information on Relations Between Groups--Information about relations between groups (defined in terms of ascriptive factors--such as gender, ethnicity, or race--or in terms of achievement, occupational groups, income, or education). From the Plain Dealer, we have a labor-management dispute emodied by a story on striking United Auto Workers in Akron. The New York Times contained stories on relationships between West Germans and German ethnics migrating there from Eastern Europe, as well as an article about Hispanic emmigrants in a small Minnesota community. USA Today reported on relationships among Hispanics on its Inquiry page. A neighborhood newspaper, the Old Brooklyn News, described relationships

between a new group of Russian immigrants and community groups. And the Slavic Village Voice told of a Polish Arts Festival and other ethnic activities in the neighborhood.

The next two represent content categories that seem to best serve the general context as well as others. The first, for example, certainly fulfills information needs in the general context but also could match individuals with job situations or even personal improvement opportunities.

Advertising/Links to Jobs, Opportunities--Display and classified advertising is commercial support for the paper but it also represents a link between buyers and sellers, between traders, between someone with a need and someone else with assistance. In addition to the classified ads for job openings, we have announcements by trades people ("producers") offering their services, personnels, and real estate ads. Much of this would seem to be aimed at "consumers," but, the link also involves "producers." All of the newspapers examined contain advertising, and many classifieds involve "small" producers, but most advertising links "small" consumers with "large" producers. The New York Times included a "Teacher Openings" listing timed to coincide with the opening of school. Our neighborhood newspaper, the Plain Press, included a Community Board with specific examples and precise information for improving productivity: nurses aide training, computer skills enhancement courses, GED classes, clerical training, neighborhood activist groups, Bib Brother/Big Sister groups, a summer jobs fair, an employment program, and free job placement assistance at the United Labor Agency. In essence, the community paper presents efforts of community, human resources and other assistance groups to those who should need their services the most.

Leisure Guides & Satisfaction--Information on entertainment (TV, film, theater) is largely for personal leisure decisions. Included here are listings of events, ads, reviews, gossip, etc. The New York Times, New York Post and Cleveland Plain Dealer contain theatre and film directories. The latter also had a story on two women fighting sexism in Hollywood, a "producer" issue that also describes relationships between groups. Most entertainment information is aimed at people in their role as consumers, not producers.

The following four categories represent newspaper content which could serve development in the personal context.

Models of Experience for the "Common Man/Woman"/"Coping Scenarios"--Considerable information in the media represents what journalists call "human interest." From the Plain Dealer (Sept. 14, 1988, p. 9), we have an article on an elderly couple evicted from their house which, after investigation by reporters, had failed to claim dividend checks for years. Models come in various forms and their utility as development communication probably is greatest as lessons of experience by and for the "common" or "uncommon" person. Here we have "coping" scenarios that may help people in evaluating their own lives, by comparison or contrast. Most of the papers contained stories of a Vietnam veteran haunted by My Lai memories who

died homeless after arguing over a bottle of vodka. A housing story in the Times told of the problems faced by the closing of a welfare hotel, and the New York Post reported on the now destitute author of the book, "The Graduate." The content at the point of "consumption" is likely to be viewed more for voyeurism and entertainment than as a "learning experience." Nevertheless, over time it may serve the latter function.

Behavioral Guides--Institutions themselves provide behavioral guides that may prove useful as development communication. For example, one issue of the Post (Aug. 25, 1988, p. 13, 29) included stories on the Catholic Church's movie guide and a story about how parents can rent dogs to sniff out their kids' drugs. The latter story is also an example of information on social problems.

Advice Columnists for Personal Decision-Making--Newspapers today contain a host of columnists that target major areas of people's lives. At the most general level are the Ann Landers and Dear Abby columns, which advise "little" people on problems that affect people's lives directly and their productivity at least indirectly. Among the more specialized columnists are those focusing on: computers, pets, medicine, senior citizens problems, youths' problems, hobbists, leisure interests, etc. Examples include the New York Post's medical column by Dr. Stuart Berger.

Life Sections and "Lifestyle Messages--The old "women's pages" and society news were replaced by less gender-specific life sections in most major metro dailies. USA Today's lifestyles section is a good example and a recent issue contained articles on "our favorite body parts" and the trend to physical fitness (Sept. 14, 1988, p. 1D) and the difficulty of being a teenager today, as well as entertainment stories. Some of these stories may provide self-help information that indirectly relates to one's productivity (e.g., improving our health, which affects job performance directly).

The following represents content serving people's information needs in the job context.

Business Information/"Producer Info"--Business sections of newspapers have grown in recent years and stories about economics have even moved to the front page. Much of the information in the business sections is most useful to moderately well-off individuals. At least indirectly, the information has utility as development communication. Stock market information may guide investments, just as personal conversations with stock brokers may. Stories about business decisions may act as models for one's own small enterprise in the short run or as fodder to consider for one's own entrepreneurial future. However, most of the business information is not directly applicable to most people, who are not entrepreneurs but rather work in larger organizations and institutions (whether private business/industry or public offices/schools). Where is the information to help these people? What types of content would be most useful--not just in attracting attention but in actually improving employees' productivity?

Most of the New York Times' business section appeals to financiers, stock brokers and business management. An instructive story on the 30th anniversary of the invention of the computer chip was interesting as an example of creativity. The New York Post contained stories that come closest in their appeal to the less wealthy. One column focused on "small investors," and another story described how new technology was helping a small clothing manufacturer who had grown from a small store front to a large building; this latter story also represents a "model" for other entrepreneurs. Though much of the content in the Wall Street Journal is aimed at consumers (e.g., an article on reduced air fares), it is also an excellent source of news about new technologies and efforts to develop them; in the Sept. 14th (1988) issue, a new technology by a small Massachusetts company to make flat color TV screens and computer monitors is a clear example of this.

We will report results of an exploratory study which involved several survey items that examine the public's perceptions of their own productivity.

A SURVEY ON PRODUCTIVITY

Some 344 adults were interviewed by telephone in a survey conducted in May-June, 1988, in a large midwestrn city. The Communication Research Center at Cleveland State University selected residents age 18 and older through traditional random-digit dialing techniques. The questions on productivity were included as part of a larger survey on the quality of life.

Sources for Increasing Productivity--Respondents were asked the following: "Regardless of whether or where we work, each of us could probably become more productive, more efficient. What do you think would make you more productive?" This followed a question seeking respondents' job or occupation. The question was deliberately broad to allow for the diverse circumstances in which respondents find themselves. As Table 1 notes, one of the most frequent responses was a denial of the premise that any increase was possible. Some 7.6% of the respondents said they were already working as hard as they could---"I'm peddling as fast as I can," "I need a rest now, not more work," "I couldn't do any more," "I already am efficient," and other descriptions.

Other responses were categorized along several dimensions. First, many of the responses represented claims for personal control or responsibility. These included: more motivation, enthusiasm, or energy (cited by 5.2%), managing one's time better and better scheduling (cited by 4.9%), working harder or spending more time (4.1%), personal discipline or applying oneself better (4.1%), changing one's attitude, and being more contented or less critical of work or coworkers (2.6%).

Second were responses which suggested external help with individual initiative would increase one's productivity. Leading the

list here were the 15% who cited more education or more knowledge, as well as better job skills (more technical) and better communication skills (cited by 2%).

Third were those who located control in the workplace and cited a need for changes there for increased productivity. These included: more money or incentives at work (cited by 9.6%), better leadership at work (2.3%), more help, people, or assistants at work (2.3%), better technology or computers at work (2%), a better defined job or a change in the job description at work (1%), finding a better job, getting into the job market or finding regular work (7.0%).

Others cited economic circumstances or environmental concerns (better transportation, getting a car, learning how to drive, 1.2%), and some said their work performance would improve if they had more outside interests, got out and "did more" or did more volunteer work (4.9%).

Sources of Help & Information for Increasing Productivity--As noted earlier, people can seek help from a variety of sources. Some seek institutional help, some talk with friends or associates, some consult books, and some look inside themselves for motivation. In many cases, communication is a necessary condition. After the question asking what would make respondents more productive, we asked the following: "Where would you go for information or help on this?"

As Table 2 notes, many of the same items cited as means for improving productivity appeared again. Thus, if people said they needed more skills, they often cited education as the next step. More education, school counselors and coursework were cited by 16% of those surveyed. Those who cited workplace solutions often identified bosses or managers (11%) or people they work with (1%).

Media sources and books/libraries were cited by 25 respondents (7.2%). Other institutions were cited by a fifth of the sample, including 16% who said they would be more productive if they went back to school or took courses somewhere. Employment services, local hospitals and community centers and professional associations also were cited.

More than 10% cited people at work, including the boss, manager or supervisor. Family, personal friends and neighbors were cited by 3.5%. Professional help (therapy, minister) was cited by 2% and personal discipline was cited by 4.4%. Some 3.5% rejected the question and said they could not be helped.

Relationships between Solutions & Help for Increasing Productivity--What is the relationship between the solutions for increased productivity and sources of help or information? There is a positive correlation between citations of personal control (discipline, motivation) and seeking help from professionals ($r=.15$, $p<.002$) and a negative relationship with seeking help from other institutions ($r=-.18$, $p<.001$). As we would expect, there is a positive relationship between citations that external help would

improve one's productivity (e.g., more education, training) and seeking help from other institutions (r=.61, p<.001); a negative relationship is found with seeking help from one's place of work (r=-.14, p<.004). And those who seek the solution to increased productivity at work also located help in the same location (r=.50,p<.001). Those who cited other bases for increasing their productivity were more likely to cite the media (r=.15, p<.002) and other people (r=.19, p<.001) as sources of information or assistance.

Relationships with Demographic Variables--Sources of productivity also are correlated with demographic factors. Citations of personal control is positively correlated with occupational status (r=.16, p<.001). Seeking help externally from other institutions was negatively associated with age (r=-.30, p<.001), and locating the source of increased productivity in the workplace was negatively correlated with age (r=-.21, p<.000) and positively correlated with occupational status (r=.20, p<.000) and level of education (r=.13, p<.01).

Both sources of productivity and where people would go for help or information were related to communication variables. Seeking information or help from other institutions was positively correlated with the number of daily newspapers read (r=.11, p<.05), reading USA Today (r=.13, p<.01), reading the Wall Street Journal (r=.10, p<.05), and to the overall readership score (r=.11, p<.02). Seeking information or help from the media themselves was correlated with readership of weekly newspapers (r=.12, p<.05) and readership of a business weekly (r=.13, p<.007). The frequency with which respondents watch local TV news was negatively associated with seeking external help from institutions (r=.10, p<.05) and locating the source of increased productivity in the workplace (r=-.09, p<.054); TV news viewing also was negatively correlated with seeking help or information from other institutions (r=-.12, p<.01).

SUMMARY

The concept of "development communication" has been applied in the Third World for more than a decade but not applied in the American context. In this paper we examined the concept and explored conceptual issues, then reviewed people's needs for development information, the communication system that delivers such information and barriors that exist. We noted that people's needs for development information may occur in the general context, the personal context and the job context. Several newspapers were examined to construct an inventory of content which could fulfill development functions; this analysis produced several categories: social linkage/information on social problems, institutional linkage, group linkage, coping scenarios/models of experience for the common man/woman, advertising/links to jobs and opportunities, behavioral guides, leisure guides and satisfaction, producer information/business information, advice columnists for personal decision-making, and life sections and "lifestyle messages." Most of these content categories fulfill developmental functions in the general context.

This critical analysis was followed by the results of a survey tapping public perceptions of productivity. Conducted in a midwestern metropolitan area, the survey tapped people's perceptions of what would make them more productive, where they would go for help and information to achieve this, whether they had considered starting their own enterprise and why. People's perceptions of what would increase their own productivity were categorized into several categories: personal control, where control was located within oneself (e.g., citations of motivation, personal discipline by 28.5%); external help with individual initiative (e.g., more education, better job and communication skills, cited by 17.5%), external control in the workplace, where changes in people, rewards or the situation were cited (24%); and others (6%). Where people would go for help or information to become more productive included: other institutions (e.g., education, 20%); the workplace (e.g., one's boss or coworkers, 10%); media (mass media, books and libraries, 7%); other people (e.g., family, friends and neighbors, 3.5%); professional help (therapy and ministers, 2%); personal discipline (4.4%) and rejection of any potential increase (3.5%). Bivariate relationships with demographic factors and mass communication variables also were discussed.

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TABLE 1

PERSONAL PRODUCTIVITY

What Would Make You More Productive?

Personal Control:		
I am productive, at maximum now	26	(7.6%)
Motivation, enthusiasm, more energy	18	(5.2%)
Managing my time better, better scheduling, stop scattering efforts	17	(4.9%)
Working harder, spending more time	14	(4.1%)
Personal discipline, applying myself	14	(4.1%)
Changing attitude, being more contented and less critical of work, coworkers	9	(2.6%)
External Help with Individual Initiative:		
More education, more knowledge	52	(15.1%)
Better job skills (more technical)	5	(1.5%)
Better communication skills	3	(.9%)
External Control in Workplace:		
More money, incentives at work	33	(9.6%)
Better leadership at work	8	(2.3%)
More help, people, assistants at work	8	(2.3%)
Technology, better computer at work	6	(1.7%)
Better defined or change in job description at work	3	(.9%)
Finding a better job, getting into job market, regular work	24	(7.0%)
Other:		
Better transportation, get car, learn how to drive	4	(1.2%)
Do more volunteer work, get out and do more, more outside interests	17	(4.9%)

TABLE 2

WHERE PEOPLE WOULD GO FOR HELP/INFORMATION

Where you would go for information or help to become more productive:		
Media:		
Mass Media	7	(2.0%)
Libraries, books	18	(5.2%)
Other Institutions:		
More education, college, school counselors, take courses	56	(16.3%)
Employment services, apply for jobs	6	(1.7%)
Local hospital, rec. center, sr. center	6	(1.7%)
Professional associations	4	(1.2%)
Work/Job:		
See boss, manager, supervisor, administrator	37	(10.8%)
People work with	3	(.9%)
Other People:		
Family members, parents	6	(1.7%)
Friends	5	(1.5%)
Neighbors	1	(.3%)
Professional Help:		
Therapy	2	(.6%)
Minister, pastor, church groups	4	(1.2%)
Other:		
Discipline, put own mind to it	15	(4.4%)
Mail, brochures	1	(.3%)
Can't be helped, rejects question	12	(3.5%)